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Remarks:

Amendments to the claims:

Claims 1-21 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 5 is amended to address a rejection under 35 USC 112; claim 7 is amended to address objection to the specification.

Regarding the allowable subject matter:

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 1-4, 6, 7 and 9-21 are allowable.

Regarding the objection to the present specification:

Applicants respectfully traverse the objection to the specification.

The Patent Office alleges that the specification fails to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter and that claim 7 contains claim limitations, namely, "degree of combustion in excess of 0.2" and " $(\text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2 + \text{O}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O})$ " that lack clear antecedent basis with the specification. Additionally, the Patent Office invited Applicants to amend the specification as appropriate to include the limitations of claim 7 or to amend the claim such that said limitations are consistent with the terminology found in lines 20-23 on page 6 of Applicant's specification.

Claim 7 was amended to recite "wherein the post-combustion of step (d) is conducted to achieve an oxidation degree in excess of 0.2, as determined by the ratio of $(\text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O})$ to $(\text{CO} + \text{H}_2 + \text{CO}_2 + \text{H}_2\text{O})$ for resultant reactor off-gases." Applicants submit that the features of amended claim 7 are consistent with the terminology found in lines 20-23 on page 6 of the present specification.

Accordingly, the objection to the specification should be withdrawn.

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Regarding the rejection of claims 5 and 8 under 35 USC 112, second paragraph:
Applicants respectfully traverse the objection of the foregoing claims.

The Patent Office alleges claim 5 is indefinite because it recites a range that is not encompassed by a base claim on which it depends and that claim 5 fails to further properly limit the range recited in claim 1. Additionally, the Patent Office alleges that claim 8 is indefinite because there is insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation "oxidation degree" in the claim.

Claim 5 was amended to further limit the range recited in claim 1. Claim 7 was amended to provide sufficient antecedent for the feature "oxidation degree" in claim 8. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 5 and 8 are definite and particularly point and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection of claims 5 and 8.

In view of the foregoing remarks, reconsideration of the rejection raised by the Patent Office is respectfully requested, and early issuance of a *Notice of Allowance* is solicited.

Should the Patent Office in charge of this application believe that telephonic communication with the undersigned representative would meaningfully advance the prosecution of this application towards allowance, the Patent Office is invited to contact the undersigned at their earliest convenience.

CONDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION FOR FEES

Should any further fee be required by the Commissioner in order to permit the timely entry of this paper, including any extension of time fees, the Commissioner is authorized to charge any such fee to Deposit Account No. 14-1263.

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Respectfully Submitted;

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10 Dec 2009

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CERTIFICATION OF TELEFAX TRANSMISSION:

I hereby certify that this paper and all attachments thereto is being telefax transmitted to the US Patent and Trademark Office to telefax number: 571 273-8300 on the date shown below:

Allyson Ross

Allyson Ross

10-Dec-2009

Date:

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